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University of Northern Iowa Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes, November 16, 1987

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Faculty Senate Minutes

November 16, 1987

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1. Consultative session with the General Education Committee and the University community relative to the new General Education Program.

The Senate was called to order at 3:33 p.m. on November 16, 1987, in the Board Room of Gilchrist Hall by Chairperson Boots.

Present: Myra Boots, James Chadney, David Crownfield, Susann Doody, David Duncan, Peter Goulet, Marian Krogmann, John Longnecker, Ken McCormick, Charles Quirk, Thomas Romanin, Nick Teig, Evelyn Wood, Marc Yoder, William Waack, ex officio.

Alternates: Robert Ward/Gerald Intemann.

Absent: Bill Henderson, James Kelly, Gerald Peterson.

Members of the press were requested to identify themselves. Anne Phillips of the Waterloo Courier was in attendance.

The Chair indicated that this session was a consultative session between the Faculty Senate and the General Education Committee and the University community. The Chair requested that minutes be taken.

Professor Darrel Davis addressed the Senate. Professor Davis updated the Senate on recent changes to the General Education Program. He cited that a biology course entitled "Life and Energy" has been added to Sphere I and "Continuity of Life" has been added to Sphere II. A lab course in life science has been added to Sphere II. He stated that the prerequisite of taking a specific course in Sphere I before taking a specific course in Sphere II has been deleted. Students now can take any Sphere II course following completion of the Sphere I requirement. He stated that the university lab requirement may be met by taking any lab course in the College of Natural Science. He relayed that representatives of the business education curriculum had requested to substitute Macro and Micro Economics (6 hours) for the general education course in Economics (3 hours) in Category 2. Davis stated that the Committee has approved this for teaching majors but not for non-teaching majors from the School of Business. He indicated that the transition into this program has not yet been resolved questioning how long courses in the old program should be offered and whether new courses can be substituted into the old general ed program. He stated that the Committee is considering packaging courses for the fall semester which may include a package of Humanities I, Writing and Wellness and/or Humanities I, a Mathematics course and Speech. He stated this option would be to facilitate scheduling for incoming freshmen. He pointed out that the Mathematics Department has determined

that freshmen will be assigned to levels 1, 2, or 3 of math courses based on the student's ACT score. Professor Davis also pointed out that the Articulation Agreement with community college relative to the A.A. Degree is under discussion between the University and the community colleges.

Senator Goulet inquired as to what progress was being made with the community colleges. Assistant Vice President Geadelamnn indicated that last summer she had met with Darrel Davis, Director of Admissions Wielenga, Registrar Leahy, and Associate Director of Admissions Hendrickson concerning a proposal modifying the Articulation Agreement. This proposed amendment has been discussed with our colleagues at Iowa and Iowa State, and will be discussed with the community college deans at a meeting on November 20.

Vice President Martin stated that because of the variety of courses and options in the old General Education Program a student had little difficulty finding courses to take. That situation is not similar to the transition we are facing now because what was introduced of required courses is the new program. He indicated that several influences will impact the scheduled transition of the new General Education Program. He cited the commitment of discretionary resources for faculty salaries last year and the plan to use the increase in tuition for another double digit salary increase. Therefore, funds available for additional staffing for the General Education Program probably won't exceed \$200,000 for next year. He pointed out that the university has requested and the Board of Regents has approved for a one million dollar equity base adjustment to overcome the out-of-state inequity present among the Regent's institutions. He stated if this amount is appropriated, our constraints will be eased. He pointed out that freshmen enrollment was down this year and may be down again next year which is good for staffing but reduces income. He indicated that the commitment of departments to offer quality general education courses is reassuring. He pointed out that currently the general education impact fund has \$150,000 to which \$50,000 will be added next fall dedicated for staffing. He pointed out that we seem to increase the number of course offerings every couple years which must lead to a lower frequency of course offerings. He stated we may need to look to better scheduling of courses and look at class size relative to small sections. He indicated that the rewards system will place greater emphasis on teaching in the general education program. He cited that our majors continue to grow and that we cannot seem to control them. He pointed out that the 4-year degree is no longer the mode in public universities with over 50% of students needing more than four years to complete a degree.

Senator Duncan indicated that he has heard both ways about the freshman class; some indicating there would be an increase and some a decrease. Vice President Martin indicated we will be campaigning for more minority and out-of-state students for diversity purposes but pointed out that there are not as many students graduating from Iowa high schools.

Senator Duncan inquired if the University is really seeking a lower enrollment. Vice President Martin stated we are probably adequately

staffed for an enrollment of 9,500 students and yes, the University would welcome fewer students if no additional state money is forthcoming.

Professor Al Gilgen stated that if rewards are going to accrue to those teaching general education courses, how is this practice to be operationalized? Is this to be done on the basis of student evaluations and is the decision being taking out of department head's hands? He cited in certain classes such as 40:008 it would therefore be desirable to reduce class sizes since smaller classes are rated higher. Vice President Martin stated the intent is to shift rewards slightly so that general education teaching is encouraged but this is not a radical shift and that department heads will continue to be the principal evaluators.

Senator Krogmann indicated the students tend not to like general education courses, but you cannot assume there is not quality teaching occurring.

Chairperson Boots asked if a task force would be formed to create a policy on the rewards system. Vice President Martin indicated this area has been discussed with the Council of Deans and that a draft proposal has been discussed.

Senator Longnecker inquired as to what you do with faculty hired to teach general education courses who are no longer needed to teach courses in the new general education program or hired to teach very specific department courses and thus would not be suited to teaching general education. Vice President Martin cited that as turnover occurs, departments and colleges can reallocate positions; but pointed out that some additional staff are needed immediately.

Senator Duncan indicated that as he looks at individual people retiring, many of these people are the faculty that teach your general education courses currently and are best at doing so. Vice President Martin stated that recruiting strategies are needed to hire people willing to teach some general education.

Professor Loree Rackstraw inquired if more summer research grants could be designated to assist individuals to prepare to teach general education courses. Vice President Martin responded in the affirmative and indicated that mini grant programs will emphasize this area.

Assistant Vice President Geadelmann indicated she is meeting with the deans to get the needs assessment completed and that, hopefully, allocation of money can be completed by Thanksgiving.

Senator Crownfield addressed the Senate.

"I made the request that this consultation be held in response to concerns expressed by a number of members of the faculty. I want at this time just to note a few of these.

"Before I do, I want to acknowledge that the strictly administrative questions of budget allocations, assignment of responsibilities,

scheduling, and the like are not within the ordinary purview of the Senate except as they affect educational standards and objectives. The reason a consultation on implementation of the new program seems to me appropriate is that, together with many other faculty members, I am concerned about the possibility that the implementation decisions may directly impact the ability of the faculty to carry out last year's curricular decisions.

"Some of the issues involved are these:

"Have decisions been made about which courses should be offered in the freshman year? If so, what steps are being taken to assure that the carrying capacity of those courses will stay ahead of demand, so they do not end up a few years down the road being filled with upperclassmen who need them at the last minute to graduate?

"In order to match limited resources to huge responsibilities, are we being forced to use class sizes incompatible with the course objectives and pedagogical intentions specified in the proposals we approved last year? To what extent, and with what educational cost?

"Is the appropriate classroom space available for the numbers and sizes of sections that are required, in composition, in Humanities, in math, in wellness, and elsewhere?

"Is the planned implementation premised on significant increases in teaching loads? I think specifically of Humanities, where we voted specifically for a pair of four-hour courses and where the extra hour really expresses a significant preparation responsibility in addition to the teaching hour; but there may be other places in the program where comparable load questions arise.

"Are we putting in place appropriate levels of technical support: graduate assistants, clerical help, audiovisual hardware and software, and so on.

"Is the faculty reward structure being adjusted so that the university rewards faculty for the kinds of work the new program requires? I think of standards for tenure, promotion, and individual salary adjustment, criteria for leaves, grants, summers, distinguished professor awards, the whole range of systematically organized incentives that shape faculty motivations.

"I want to add one somewhat more complex question. I recognize that the net long-term cost of instruction of the new program should not be significantly more than that of the existing curriculum, but that there are serious transitional problems. It has been suggested that much of the cost of the new program can be met by reallocation of resources, once we know what courses students are no longer taking because of the larger GE program. The trouble, of course, is that they can't move out of what they are now doing until we have the places available in the new program for them to move into. The money, then, has to be spent before we know where it can eventually be transferred from. There may, indeed, be a lag of

three or four years before we know; but if the money isn't spent first, we simply make the lag longer. Obviously this is an administrative nightmare. But if it forces us to fill freshman courses with seniors, or to abandon educational objectives to mass number-crunching, or to sacrifice quality to handle General Education as an overload, it is going to be an educational fiasco as well. This is where it becomes, in my mind, a faculty responsibility as well as an administrative one.

"One final question. To avoid the major problems, do we need to delay implementation another year?"

Professor Fred Hallberg seconded the thought of delaying the general education implementation another year citing he did not feel that money was available to correctly implement the program. Professor Al Gilgen inquired if the university intended to hire more M.A. instructors to fill positions. The Assistant Vice President responded in the affirmative for term appointments, but in the negative relative to tenure track appointments.

Senator Chadney chided the attitude that general education courses should be easy saying that they should be the most rigorous and felt that we could not do so if we hired instructors with Masters' degrees. Senator Goulet indicated that he did not agree that M.A. instructors would automatically offer less rigorous courses. He stated that with limited monies perhaps there is some validity in finding talented and committed M.A. instructors to teach general education courses, therefore creating a class of professional teachers. Senator Chadney stated that he agreed with his point; but if we do create a class of professional teachers, that situation will not work within our current structure.

Professor Gilgen stated that it would be dangerous if we let general education direct the entire university. He also stated he felt that M.A. instructors would water-down and weaken the general education program.

Professor Darrel Davis indicated he felt some courses in general education were what he characterized as basic tool courses and stated that he felt we should look at the course content and the person's ability to teach that course, not just the degree held by the instructor.

Senator Teig stated if we hire M.A. individuals, we can encourage them to grow and develop and perhaps further their educational experiences.

Professor Davis stated that the program is no better than the faculty who teach it and stated that it is extremely important for the department heads to get good people to teach general education.

Professor Loree Rackstraw inquired if general education does not shape the university, then what does.

Professor Davis stated the General Education Committee looks at Humanities as being the center of the UNI general education and educational program.

Professor Hallberg stated that he believes in rising to challenges, but feels that implementation of general education in 1988 is an insurmountable task; and, therefore, implementation should be delayed until resources become completely available.

Professor Davis stated that the Committee and the administration have agreed that if it is necessary to phase in the general education program it will be done so.

Professor Rackstraw citing a potential problem in class sizes inquired if classroom space would be available.

Senator Wood stated she felt we should begin next fall and put in only what we are able to do so in a first class manner.

Senator McCormick stated he felt we did not have enough information to make adequate decision on the faculty staffing and resource needs.

Professor Tony McAdams stated that a general education program can change the nature of the university. He stated he felt the current program undermines the upper level work at this institution. Therefore, relative to the new general education program, he encouraged his colleagues to hold the program hostage until we receive guarantees on staffing and resource availability for implementation of a quality program.

Professor Tom Hill indicated we have not talked about phasing out the old general education program. Senator Krogmann stated we must proceed carefully since we cannot force students to take major coursework only and must simultaneously provide courses in both general education programs.

Registrar Leahy stated there has been no direction as to who is required to take the new general education program. He inquired as to how long we can continue to offer the courses in the old program before forcing students into the new program courses further clogging the resource availability in the new program.

Professor Hill pointed out that courses from the old program that are also in the new program will simply continue to grow in numbers. Assistant Vice President Geadelmann indicated this is an important question and that the Deans have been asked to talk with department heads and to faculty on this question. Assistant Vice President Geadelmann indicated there will be no ultimatums on what courses must be offered or eliminated.

The Chair thanked all persons for attending and for the open discussion of this important issue.

The Senate adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip Patton
Secretary

These minutes shall stand approved as published unless corrections or protests are filed with the secretary of the Senate within two weeks of this date, Monday, November 23, 1987.